

I. Amendments to the Specification

Kindly amend the first paragraph of the specification as follows:

e This application is a continuation of U.S. Patent Appln. No. 09/672,767, filed September 29, 2000 (incorporated herein by reference), now U.S. Patent No. 6,375,677, issued April 23, 2002, which is a continuation of U.S. Patent Appln. No. 09/142,508, filed February 16, 1999 ~~September 9, 1998~~, now U.S. Patent No. 6,217,608, issued April 17, 2001, (incorporated herein by reference), which is a 371 of PCT/CA97/00151 ~~(designating the U.S.)~~, filed March 5, 1997 (designating the U.S.; and which published in English in WO 97/32543 on September 12, 1997), which claims the benefit of Canadian Patent No. 2,171,047, filed March 5, 1996, Canadian Patent No. 2,175,722, filed May 3, 1996, Canadian Patent No. 2,185,740, filed September 17, 1996, and Canadian Patent No. 2,192,520, filed December 10, 1996.